

LUNENBURG PLANNING BOARD TOWN OF LUNENBURG

Joanna L. Bilotta-Simeone, Chair
Nathan J. Lockwood, Vice-Chair
Damon McQuaid, Clk.
Kenneth Chenis, Mbr.
Matthew Allison, Mbr.



Tel: (978) 582-4147 ext 5
Fax: (978) 582-4353
960 Massachusetts Avenue
Lunenburg, MA 01462

Adam R. Burney
Land Use Director

Minutes
Public Hearing
322 Flat Hill Community Solar
October 14, 2014

Meeting Posted: Yes
Time: 7:00 PM
Place: Ritter Memorial Building, 960 Massachusetts Avenue, Lunenburg, MA 01462
Present: Joanna L. Bilotta-Simeone, Nathan J. Lockwood, Damon McQuaid, Adam R. Burney
Absent: Kenneth Chenis

Public Hearing was to hear and discuss a Special Permit and Development Plan Review under Sections 4.15. and 8.4. of the Protective Bylaw of the Town of Lunenburg for construction of a 75kW ground-mounted photovoltaic installation at 322 Flat Hill Road (Map 087, Parcel 0026). Applicant/Owner is Michael Conway, 322 Flat Hill Road, Lunenburg, MA.

M. Allison recused himself as he is an abutter to the site.

Proposed site is a 75 kW ground mounted solar array which will be located at the rear of the property behind the primary residence. The array will take up roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of the property and will consist of 270 panels and 6 volt indicators. The proposed racking is a ground screw based foundation system, no concrete piles, interconnected to Unitil at the road. Unitil will install transformer.

J. Bilotta-Simeone inquired as to abutters being impacted by view. M. Conway opined only the immediate abutters at 44 Cortland Circle, Michael and Maryellen Ramstack. Panels will face south, away from their house.

Many of the residents from the Village at Flat Hill noted they had not received notification of the hearing. A. Burney informed those in attendance that the official Town records list Robert M. Hicks Inc. as the owner and that is the legal listing for notification purposes per M.G.L. A. Burney noted that the Association should follow-up with the Assessors' Office.

Wesley Flis, Whitman and Bingham Associates, presented his review. Noted the Zoning Board of Appeals 04.08.14 approval was for a 50kW array and the application before the Board is for 75kW. If approved for 75kW, M. Conway will have to go back to the Zoning Board of Appeals. M. Conway should provide evidence to the Board that the utility company has approved connecting to the grid. A form of surety should be provided for review. Show offsets on plan. M. Conway did not plan to do fencing; wanted to bring as little foreign material on site as possible. Signage should be shown on plan. No issues with drainage analysis, but recommended the Board "condition" that the applicant maintain proposed grass surface condition under the panels. If the applicant changes the surface type to something less pervious, he would be required to provide an undated Stormwater Drainage Analysis. The same with utilizing a proposed screw mounting system. Also noted items brought forth at the September 16th In house Tech Meeting.

J. Whalen, 526 West Townsend Road- Questions arose as to why the applicant went to the Zoning Board of Appeals prior to the Planning Board. A. Burney responded that the applicant was seeking relief from the dimensional requirements.

N. Lockwood inquired as to panel height- Nine feet from ground at highest point in back sloping down to lowest point being 24 inches. Inquired as to current use of wetlands area located north of applicant- Common Area for the Village at Flat Hill.

D. McQuaid wants Applicant's plans for screening.

J. Bilotta-Simeone inquired if other residents benefit from this solar farm? M. Conway noted that in selling metered credits back to residents, they will have the opportunity to realize rebates on their energy bills. She asked M. Conway if he needed this by a specific date- end of the year.

A. Burney noted there was no proof of liability insurance in the submittal packet and an O&M Plan.

Greg Kelly, 45 Cortland Circle- Felt that some of the provided data may not be accurate; e.g. Aerial View on submittal cover page may be quite dated and not show current vegetation. Feels site will be visible from his property.

Mike Ramstack, 44 Cortland Circle- Is the Zoning Board of Appeals variance still in effect? Yes, was granted by the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Zoning Board of Appeals variance is what allows him to be before the Planning Board. He is allowed to intrude within the 200 foot buffer per the Zoning Board of Appeals special permit.

J. Whalen, 526 West Townsend Road- How far away is the nearest resident (house) to the panels? M. Conway estimated 150 feet. J. Whalen noted M. Conway is 500 feet away from the panels. Board needs to insist on appropriate buffering.

Maryellen Ramstack, 44 Cortland Circle- Will have tremendous negative visual impact. Will impact housing costs.

Tina Kroll, 12 Alder Way- Does not belong in the neighborhood.

M. Conway responded that property values will not decrease.

D. Blatt- noted M. Conway is attempting to do what the Town did; he is providing a choice by allowing an individual to lock into a price.

A. Burney clarified to the audience that the special permit issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals is within its rights and authority. The Zoning Board of Appeals' special permit does not eliminate the Planning Board's special permit; they work in conjunction.

Board can do individual or group site visit for evidence gathering. (No deliberation can be allowed.) Can request access from M. Conway. M. Conway noted that the property behind his house is open recreational for neighbors and horses trails – neighbors can walk on it at any time.

Greg Kelly, 45 Cortland Circle- requested clarification as to the Board's ability to direct buffering and deny the application. Opined project is inconsistent with residential neighborhood.

Celeste McCain, Pleasant Street- Encouraged the Board to insist on appropriate buffering.

Rachel Smith, 322 Flat Hill Road- Noted she cannot see any other houses from her rear yard other than the Ramstacks'.

Board members plan on visiting the site as a group the weekend of October 25th. Want to see a landscape/screening plan, shadow constraint plan, and want to know proximity of neighbors. D. McQuaid made Motion to continue Hearing to October 27, 7:00 PM, Second, N. Lockwood, all aye.

Recessed Hearing 9:05 PM.

Documents used at Hearing:

Application for Special Permit and Development Plan Review